

LCQ8: Arts education

Following is a question by the Hon Timothy Fok and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (February 20):

Question:

The Recommendation Report of the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District recommends that efforts be made to promote arts education on a much wider scale in schools and the community. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) Whether discussions on the aforesaid recommendation have been held with the local arts and cultural sector; if so, of the suggestions and comments made by members of the sector; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (b) of the suggestions made by schools and the community for implementing the above recommendation?

Reply:

Madam President,

(a) The Recommendation Report of the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District (Recommendation Report) points out that “...the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the major professional arts groups and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) have already been doing a lot in promoting arts education and audience building during the past few years. The Committee considers it timely that such efforts be made more structured and strategic on a much wider scale in schools and the community, particularly on enhancing appreciation of and exposure to the arts in the run-up to the commissioning of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) ...”

The Government has been in frequent discussion with the local arts and cultural sector on the subject of arts education since the establishment of the Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC) in 2000. The local arts and cultural sector subscribes to the need to expand and deepen arts education.

The CHC recommended in its Policy Recommendation Report in 2003 that arts education should be coherent and continuous and the curriculum should be diversified and comprehensive. Strengthening teacher training and quality teaching support should also be provided. The report also put forward the vision

of the family as the driving force and the school as platform for arts education. The Policy Recommendation Report also discussed the need to motivate community involvement and the role of the mass media in promoting culture and the arts.

In November 2004, the Government set up the Committee on Performing Arts to follow up on the policy recommendations of the CHC relating to the performing arts. The current term of the Committee on Performing Arts has set up an arts education working group to discuss the subject.

The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Education Bureau (EDB) co-organised two “Forums with Secondary School Headmasters and Teachers” on November 8 and 9, 2007, which introduced the development of the WKCD and the development of arts education in the new secondary school curriculum to the management team of schools and collected their views on the recommendations, amongst others, on expanding the work on arts education as set out in the Recommendation Report. The HAB, LCSD and EDB also conducted exchange sessions with various arts groups and artists on December 10, 2007 and January 28, 2008 respectively to introduce to them the arrangements under “aesthetic experience” in the curriculum of the new academic structure for senior secondary schools and to collect their views on the promotion of arts education in secondary schools.

At the four discussions, the participants recognised the need for further collaboration amongst the HAB, LCSD and EDB in their work on the promotion of arts education. The attending artists and arts groups welcomed the arrangements for arts education in the new academic structure for senior secondary schools. They were of the view that the inclusion of “aesthetic experience” under “other learning experience” would help to promote arts education more effectively and agreed that arts education would help to nurture the creativity of students. They also shared the view that enhanced promotion of arts education would help to improve the perception of artists in the community. The participants considered that the Government could render assistance in providing a platform for schools to allow them a more ready access to information on arts programmes/activities so as to help strengthen the schools’ communication with artists and arts groups in promoting arts education.

In addition, representatives of the HAB also attended a forum on the WKCD organised by the HKADC for the arts and cultural sector on November 17 last year. At the meeting, representatives of the sector expressed support for enhanced coordination among government departments in the promotion of creative industries and at the same time, the development of arts education. Regarding the new senior secondary school curriculum, the representatives considered that a balance should be struck between the importance to be attached to language

learning and to the learning of a language of the arts. It was also suggested at the meeting that there should be synergy between arts training at schools and arts education outside schools. A platform should be made available in the community to enhance the artistic atmosphere in the community as well as to preserve and encourage the flourishing of local characteristics in our community culture. The arts and cultural sector also believed that the arts should be integrated with the community to allow an interaction between them.

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs on February 15, 2008 which discussed the development of cultural software, representatives of the arts and cultural sector reiterated that universal arts and cultural education must be introduced to raise the cultural literacy of the public, to build a harmonious society and to increase the creative assets of the community. The representatives also reiterated that the mass media should play a more important role in implementing universal arts and cultural education. They also urged the Government to set up a television channel on culture as soon as possible.

In response to the views expressed by the arts and cultural sector, the HAB, LCSD and EDB will step up cooperation in the promotion of arts education. Specifically, such cooperative efforts will include exploring later this year the provision of a platform to share with the education sector information about arts education activities that the arts and cultural groups can offer to tie in with the implementation of the new senior secondary school curriculum.

To further improve on the existing provision of arts education, the “Working Group on Arts Education” under the Committee on Performing Arts, established under the purview of the HAB, will commission an independent consultant to conduct a thematic study on arts education in the coming two months. The study will cover four areas. Firstly, there will be an objective and critical examination of the policy, framework, vision, objectives, direction, implementation method, quality and quantum of arts education. Secondly, a review and analysis of the views and comments of the stakeholders of arts education, including not only the recipients of arts education but also arts practitioners, on the present provision will be carried out. Thirdly, reference will be drawn to international experience on arts education. Fourthly, specific recommendations will be made.

As to the proposal to set up a television channel on culture, the HAB and HKADC are studying carefully how best to implement the concept.

(b) The mainstream views collected from schools and the community on the recommendations concerning the implementation of arts education and audience-building during the three-month public engagement exercise on the WKCD project are listed below.

From the schools, we have received views suggesting that the Government

should provide more opportunities for the public to participate in arts and cultural activities, especially for young people so that they could have a better understanding of culture and the arts. In addition to strengthening arts education at school, there were suggestions that the Government should also enhance arts education for the public as well as enhance the training of arts professionals to tie in with the development of the WKCD. There were also views expressed that there should be arts and cultural facilities in the community to attract the public and visiting tourists.

From the community, we have received views that arts and culture should become part of everyday life. The Government should not only proactively enhance the training of arts and cultural talents, but should also make arts education a compulsory subject in schools. Arts education should start in childhood. In addition, there were also views from the community that Government-subsidised arts organisations should cater for the needs of schools and the local communities in more remote areas by organising arts and cultural programmes as well as arts education activities in those areas on a regular basis.

Ends/Wednesday, February 20, 2008